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SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN/COUNTERNARCOTICS: UNODC STRATEGY ROLLOUT AND  
IRANIAN INTEREST

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On 16 April, UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)/Kabul hosted an event at the Norwegian embassy to roll out a draft of their new Afghanistan Country Strategy for 2009-2011. The strategy contains no new initiatives, but does attempt to tie existing programs more closely to regional initiatives as articulated in the UNODC's existing "Rainbow Strategy." The new Afghan strategy also calls for an increased emphasis on the western border provinces and interaction with Iran. The Iranian Ambassador has spoken out twice in recent days in support of stronger Afghan National Police (ANP) Counter Narcotics (CN) capabilities. END SUMMARY.

2. (SBU) The April 16 event to announce UNODC's new Afghanistan Country Strategy was hosted at the Norwegian Embassy, and included participation by the Ambassador's of Iran, Turkmenistan and Pakistan as well as representatives from India, China, Russia and most western donor countries. Norwegian Ambassador Kare Aas opened the meeting by emphasizing his country's support for CN efforts and announcing Norway's commitment of between 500K to 1M USD to the Rainbow Strategy and 500K USD to help fund UNODC survey requirements. He then turned the meeting over to Jean-Luc Lemahieu, Director of the UNODC Afghan office.

3. (SBU) Lemahieu stressed that the UNODC strategy was still in the "informal stage" and solicited feedback from all interested parties. The main goal is to achieve a higher level of continuity between the Afghan plan and other regional programs as spelled out in the Rainbow Strategy. The Rainbow Initiative, which includes such regional plans as the Triangular Initiative, Caspian Sea Initiative, and Operation TARCET grew out of a series of round tables over the past 5 years, themselves the result of the Paris Pact Initiative, an international partnership to counter trafficking and consumption of Afghan opiates. The new UNODC strategy focuses on strengthening interaction between local, national and regional authorities, securing border areas, increasing precursor chemical controls, anti-corruption measures, and other capacity building trainings. Although, no completely new initiatives were proposed, Lemahieu said that existing programs with broader regional implications such as border policing and cooperation with Iran on building a series of border posts through Nimroz, Farah and Hirat provinces would be given more emphasis.

4. (SBU) At the conclusion of the presentation by the UNODC staff, the Iranian Ambassador, Fida Hussein Maliki, stressed Iran's robust CN efforts, claiming 3,600 soldiers and police killed and 12,000 wounded over the past few years. He mentioned Iran was willing to work through the Tripartite Commission and would contract to build the first border post in Nimroz province. He also stated his

willingness to work through UNODC to exchange CN information and intelligence. Ambassador Maliki criticized the current Afghan CN effort, stating that it was being marginalized by counterinsurgency efforts and especially singled out police training as ineffective. He further stated Iran was willing to help in other areas such as drug demand reduction and judicial training by training doctors and lawyers. He ended by inviting other ambassadors to visit a border post on the Iranian side of the border. NOTE: At the April 19 JCMB Conference, Maliki explicitly supported the consensus favoring increase in the official ANP manning by a further 15,000 police before the August elections. He also noted the importance of strengthening the ANP for CN purposes which is of great importance to Iran.

15. (SBU) Lemahieu stressed the cooperation between UNODC, Afghanistan, and Iran on the building of at least 15 border posts and ended by asking for more involvement from other regional countries, singling out the Chinese representative. The meeting ended with the obligatory request for funding- UNODC is looking for 51.2M USD to carry out their strategy, of which just under 25M USD has been pledged.

16. (SBU) COMMENT: The strategy, while short of specifics, shows a desire by UNODC to tie the Afghan piece into the overall picture of initiatives collectively called the Rainbow Strategy. Although still in the blueprint stage, the Afghan strategy appears to focus on areas and issues, currently seen as not receiving adequate attention from the International Community in Kabul such as the border areas, especially the Iranian-Afghan border, where the UNODC may be able to fill a useful niche. Strategy paper and slide show presentation have been forwarded to INL/AP.

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